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SOURCE [redacted]

1. During the month of February, several conferences took place with four representatives of the Central Committee of the SED and four general staff representatives of the future East German national army participating. Three representatives from the Soviet Control Commission were also present. The principal matter under discussion at these conferences was the formulation and implementation of a conscription law for East Germany.
2. On 21 February, it was decided unanimously that conscription would be instituted on 1 July 1953. The Central Committee of the SED is to have the appropriate law ready for enactment by 1 June 1953. The phrase "compulsory universal military service" (allgemeine Wehrpflicht) will not be used; instead, the phrase "compulsory police service" (allgemeine Polizeidienstpflicht) is to be used in the law.
3. The final conference on 23 February dealt with matters pertaining to the implementation of the projected conscription law and those measures which would have to be taken in support of the law, i.e., extensive barracks construction and a considerable expansion of state food reserves after the 1953 harvest.
4. As chief of the general staff delegation, General Vincenz Mueller is reported to have expressed his views during the conferences about as follows:
 - a. The introduction of compulsory military service is a welcome step, but, regrettable is the fact that the plan was formulated solely on Russian initiative and, despite assurances to the contrary, none of the suggestions tendered by Mueller and his colleagues received any consideration.
 - b. The SCC has correctly recognized the almost overt resistance of the populace, especially on the part of young people, toward military service and has pointed out that this resistance can only be overcome by making military service compulsory. However, since little remains hidden from the populace, it will soon become publicly known who ordered conscription. This will not decrease public resistance at all. Preferable would have been a well-organized "voluntary" recruiting campaign. It is much easier to inspire young people to serve voluntarily in a national army than to subject them to compulsory service on Russian orders.

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- c. The establishment and expansion of a national armed force could not be carried out without the direct aid of the Russians. The Russians, by returning the previously requisitioned draft rosters (christarm-
rollen), have made a great contribution to the drafting of the eligible age groups. The progress made so far in the registration of "future eligibles" (kuenftige Dienstpflichtige) was possible only because the Russians returned the old draft rosters. The present registration will probably be completed by the middle of April.
 - d. An order issued early in the year by the Central Committee of the SED called upon Peccale's Police officers to volunteer for a term of service lasting twelve years. This action has met with only partial success. If no further progress is made, an acute shortage of training cadres will be felt when the national forces are built up.
 - e. It is a mistake that SED functionaries are given so many varied and responsible positions. As a result, the career of an administrative functionary is more attractive than that of an officer in the national armed forces.
5. Mueller is reported also to have stated his disapproval of the decision of the Central Committee of the SED to place under the control of a special commission, personally headed by Walter Ulbricht, the implementation of organizational matters pertaining to compulsory police duty (Polizeidienstpflicht). This measure would certainly alienate to some extent all those forced to serve, except those persons coming from the ranks of the FDJ. The fact that he, Mueller, is a member of the special commission as a military adviser does not remedy the difficulty. Mueller reportedly also stated his preference for a term of service of two years, rather than the term of eighteen months already decided on.
6. At the close of the conferences Mueller was ordered to submit his ideas in writing to the Central Committee of the SED by 9 March 1953.

